

Pacific Northwest Region Water Supply Update May 7, 2008

It appears that spring has finally arrived in the PN Region. The 10 day forecast calls for little or no precipitation, and high temperatures gradually rising to normal for this time of year. The mountain snowpack has begun to melt and flows will rise throughout the period. April was cool and unsettled, but precipitation was sub-par and ranged from about 40% to 80% of average. The cool weather preserved snowpack and kept April's runoff at minimum levels. Irrigation demand has also been below normal but will pick up. The region is set up for potential flood control operations in some basins because the cold temperatures of the past month have compressed the spring runoff into two months rather than three. A period of hot temperatures and/or significant rainfall would be necessary for any real threat to be realized, and those conditions are not evident in the next couple weeks. A slower melt pattern will preserve the freshet later into summer and reduce or delay reservoir drawdowns. Most reservoirs should fill or come close to filling in 2008.

	Snowpack % of avg	Water Year Precipitation % of avg	Forecasted Spring Runoff % of avg	Reservoir Storage % full	Allocations
Yakima (WA)	129	98	117	48	100%
Flathead/Hungry Horse (MT)	119	95	104	65	n/a
Crooked (OR)	n/a	101	134	97	n/a
Boise (ID)	101	102	102	65	n/a
Payette (ID)	123	104	109	60	n/a
Upper Snake (ID)	109	102	98	61	n/a
Columbia Basin (Columbia R at the Dalles)	n/a	104	99	n/a	n/a

Pacific Northwest Region Water Supply Update April 2, 2008

The second half of March brought a return of winter, particularly in the Upper Snake where it was needed most. Snowpack in the Upper Snake climbed from 92% of average on March 1 to the current reading of 104%. This moisture boost means the entire PN Region will enter April with near to above normal snowpack and runoff forecasts. A warm and dry April and May would reduce yields, but adequate water supplies are a virtual lock at this point. A cool unsettled weather pattern has prevailed so far this spring, and this pattern is forecast to continue into next week. The cool temperatures have delayed the onset of runoff that would normally start occurring by late March, and will keep irrigation demands low as we enter the irrigation season that began in April 1. The 3 month outlook for precipitation calls for “equal chances”; that is, no discernable pattern is predicted at this time. No major flood control operations are anticipated at this time. Reservoirs in the PN Region should fill or nearly fill in 2008. April 1 runoff forecasts are still being computed; the values listed here are early bird estimates and subject to change.

	Snowpack % of avg	Water Year Precipitation % of avg	Forecasted Spring Runoff % of avg	Reservoir Storage % full	Allocations
Yakima (WA)	114	101	117	46	n/a
Flathead/Hungry Horse (MT)	105	97	104	68	n/a
Crooked (OR)	127	106	134	78	n/a
Boise (ID)	103	108	102	54	n/a
Payette (ID)	105	109	109	61	n/a
Upper Snake (ID)	104	106	98	57	n/a
Columbia Basin (Columbia R at the Dalles)	131	106	103	n/a	n/a

Pacific Northwest Region Water Supply Update March 12, 2008

The PN Region remains near average for snowpack and projected runoff, despite receiving very little precipitation over the last 3 to 4 weeks. The lack of new snow in the mountains since mid-February has allowed most snowpack percentages to drop by about 10 to 15% since a month ago. However, the drier and milder pattern has allowed orderly melting of low elevation snow and lessened the flood potential posed by the abnormally large snowfall of late January and early February, particularly west of the Cascade mountains. A pattern shift back to a wetter regime is forecasted over the next week. Mountain snowpacks typically reach their maximum accumulation in early to mid April, so a few more weeks of winter weather is still needed to shore up water supplies. Most reservoirs in the PN Region should fill or nearly fill in 2008, barring a repeat of last year's warm and exceptionally dry spring. The 3 month outlook for precipitation calls for "equal chances"; that is, no discernable pattern is predicted at this time.

	Snowpack % of avg	Water Year Precipitation % of avg	Forecasted Spring Runoff % of avg	Reservoir Storage % full	Allocations
Yakima (WA)	110	98	114	45	n/a
Flathead/Hungry Horse (MT)	101	97	102	70	n/a
Crooked (OR)	106	114	120	65	n/a
Boise (ID)	96	107	100	48	n/a
Payette (ID)	102	111	109	64	n/a
Upper Snake (ID)	92	100	95	52	n/a
Columbia Basin (Columbia R at the Dalles)	120	104	101	n/a	n/a

Pacific Northwest Region Water Supply Update February 7, 2008

Snow, snow, and more snow continues to pile up in the Pacific Northwest. Following a short break in mid-January, a seemingly unending string of large snow-producing storms has impacted the region. Temperatures have remained cold, resulting in very impressive snow accumulations throughout much of the region. Particularly deep snowpacks are found in the Oregon and Washington Cascades, the Coast Range of Oregon, and in Northern Idaho. Mountain highways have been closed on numerous occasions due to avalanches and snow removal, as have interior roads from blowing and drifting. The Flathead and Upper Snake basins have benefitted to a lesser degree from the recent storms, although snowpacks there have improved to near average. The forecast for the next two weeks calls for an unsettled pattern with more breaks between storms and slightly moderating temperatures. Water supplies are shaping up to be adequate or better for 2008; a continuation of the wet weather into March may begin shifting the focus toward potential flood control operations this spring.

	Snowpack % of avg	Water Year Precipitation % of avg	Forecasted Spring Runoff % of avg	Reservoir Storage % full	Allocations
Yakima (WA)	119	105	110	42	n/a
Flathead/Hungry Horse (MT)	98	94	101	74	n/a
Crooked (OR)	135	122	134	53	n/a
Boise (ID)	108	123	105	41	n/a
Payette (ID)	115	121	114	62	n/a
Upper Snake (ID)	95	106	97	44	n/a
Columbia Basin (Columbia R at the Dalles)	130	110	98	n/a	n/a

Pacific Northwest Region Water Supply Update January 9, 2008

Winter finally arrived with a passion to the Pacific Northwest. A string of winter storm events, some quite substantial, has impacted the region starting about a week before Christmas and continuing through the end of this week. Mountain snowpacks have grown from substandard to near or above average over most of the region; they still lag behind in the Flathead and Upper Snake basins however. Weather forecasts call for a respite from the storms as high pressure will settle in by the weekend and last into the 10 to 14 day period. Despite the encouraging pattern over the last couple weeks, it is important to note that about 50 to 60% of the winter is still to come, and we're not protected from drought conditions yet. To illustrate this, we are very near the snowpack conditions of last year at this time, when the precipitation basically turned off for rest of the season. Hopefully the La Nina pattern will continue to pump moisture into the region.

	Snowpack % of avg	Water Year Precipitation % of avg	Forecasted Spring Runoff % of avg	Reservoir Storage % full	Allocations
Yakima (WA)	110	102	103	42	n/a
Flathead/Hungry Horse (MT)	84	88	100	78	n/a
Crooked (OR)	103	110	80	51	n/a
Boise (ID)	97	116	93	37	n/a
Payette (ID)	110	123	102	60	n/a
Upper Snake (ID)	86	104	92	36	n/a
Columbia Basin (Columbia R at the Dalles)	96	106	95	n/a	n/a

Pacific Northwest Region Water Supply Update December 13, 2007

The cold has arrived to the Pacific Northwest, but we're still waiting for the precipitation and snowpack. The exception was an extremely large storm event in early December that lead to severe and record flooding in portions of western Washington and Oregon. Most of the impacts were limited to west of the Cascade Mountains and only moderate precipitation reached the interior mountains, where it mostly fell as snow to begin building the 2008 snowpack. Although it is still early in the season, snowpack is lagging behind average. Weather forecasts for the next two weeks call for a progressive pattern with minor storm events. The region will be heavily reliant on this winter's precipitation to avoid a repeat or worsening of drought impacts in 2008. The first runoff forecasts will be available in early January.

	Snowpack % of avg	Water Year Precipitation % of avg	Forecasted Spring Runoff % of avg	Reservoir Storage % full	Allocations
Yakima (WA)	58	101	n/a	39	n/a
Flathead/Hungry Horse (MT)	65	82	n/a	80	n/a
Crooked (OR)	55	104	n/a	50	n/a
Boise (ID)	59	103	n/a	34	n/a
Payette (ID)	74	115	n/a	57	n/a
Upper Snake (ID)	73	106	n/a	30	n/a
Columbia Basin (Columbia R at the Dalles)	n/a	101	n/a	n/a	n/a

Pacific Northwest Region Water Supply Update November 7, 2007

The 2008 water year started out wet in October, but most of that moisture was confined to the southern half of the PN Region. November has been clear and dry so far. However, the precipitation in October saturated the soils in many of the mountain locations in the Snake River basin, which will lead to more efficient runoff next spring. All that is needed now is a big snowpack to start forming. The two week forecast calls for a return to somewhat wetter conditions, but no major storms are predicted. It is still too early to accurately assess the prospects for WY 2008, but long range climate predictions call for a La Nina event, which tips the odds in favor of wetter conditions in the Northwest. But a La Nina is no guarantee of a wet winter. The Region will be heavily reliant on this winter's precipitation to avoid a repeat or worsening of drought impacts in 2008.

	WY 2008 Precipitation % of avg	WY 2008 Runoff % of avg	Reservoir Storage % full	Allocations
Yakima (WA)	79	93	28	full
Flathead/Hungry Horse (MT)	77	66	82	n/a
Crooked (OR)	115	61	49	n/a
Boise (ID)	144	97	28	n/a
Payette (ID)	124	109	51	n/a
Upper Snake (ID)	141	90	19	n/a
Columbia Basin (Columbia R at the Dalles)	102	91	n/a	n/a

Pacific Northwest Region Water Supply Update October 10, 2007

The 2008 water year is only 10 days old but is at least starting out on a positive note, with cool showery weather throughout much of the Pacific Northwest. More wet weather is forecast in the 8 to 14 day period. A wet autumn will help prepare mountain soils for another snow accumulation season and lead to more efficient runoff next spring. It is a couple of months too early to accurately assess the prospects for WY 2008, but long range climate predictions call for a La Niña event, which tips the odds in favor of wetter conditions in the Northwest. This climate signal has a stronger relationship in the western and northern parts of the PN Region (Yakima, Flathead, Upper Columbia basins), and lesser effect in the southern and eastern tier basin such as the Upper Snake, where a wet winter is needed most. The Region will be heavily reliant on this winter's precipitation to avoid a repeat or worsening of drought impacts in 2008; the December-February period is critical, when 60-70% of the winter snowpack typically accumulates.

	WY 2007 Precipitation % of avg	WY 2007 Runoff % of avg	Reservoir Storage % full	Allocations
Yakima (WA)	106	111	27	full
Flathead/Hungry Horse (MT)	92	88	84	n/a
Crooked (OR)	91	59	49	n/a
Boise (ID)	76	60	25	n/a
Payette (ID)	79	66	49	n/a
Upper Snake (ID)	79	66	12	n/a
Columbia Basin (Columbia R at the Dalles)	93	89	n/a	n/a